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TOPOGRAPHY AND DISEASES OF THE COUNTRY OF ASSAM.

BY ASSISTANT SURGEON MC COSH.

Face of the country.—ASSAM is that extensive tract of country, on either side of the *Burhampooter*, extending on its northern shore from the river Monash opposite to Gowalparah, and on the southern, from Nogurbera hill about 16 miles above Gowalparah, to the foot of the Himalayah mountains, close upon the western boundary of China. Though, geographically speaking, Assam terminates at the river Monash, yet the same peculiar part of tract country borders the *Burhampooter*, as far as Jumalpoore, has the same climate, and the same change of seasons. The appearance of Assam is very different from that of most other parts of India, being a perfect flat as far as the eye can reach, interspersed with a multitude of little green conical hills, like haycocks on a meadow, rising abruptly from the level plain to the height of from one to five or seven hundred feet. So very singular are the shape and arrangement of these mountains in miniature, that the imagination could fancy them to be the monument of a country now no more, that once stood on the same level with their summit; whose obdurate nuclei having resisted the floods of centuries that washed away the more moveable materials into the Indian Ocean, were designed by Providence as places of shelter and retreat, from the waters that periodically inundate the land. Yet strange it is, the inhabitants do not avail themselves of this provision of Nature, to raise themselves above the reach of the floods, when they could do so without trouble, expense, or inconvenience. They will sit still on the *kala mutti*, till the water encompasses their huts, and quenches the fire on their hearths, rather than be at the trouble of living comfortably upon dry, solid, healthy soil; and when the river has risen too high for them to wade from one house to another, or even to allow them to stand upon their own floors, they paddle out of their huts in canoes, and roost upon *muchauns* high as the thatch itself, with the frequent calamity of their children's falling out of their nests and being drowned. So much for the influence of superstition! These little hills are believed to be the abodes of devils and unclean spirits, and unless they are consecrated by a religious temple, and defended by the worshipper of Bramah, it is judged advisable to leave fiends incarnate in undisturbed possession.

Soil and cultivation.—Though the country is at all seasons of the year swampy and intersected with half-filled nullahs and stagnant jheels,

and though during the rains it is flooded with water, yet in the dry season it is very susceptible of cultivation, and would no doubt amply repay any labor and expense bestowed upon it, in producing abundant crops. The soil is for the most part alluvial, though it sometimes consists of red clay, so stiff and tenacious, as to resist the current of the river like rock itself, even when undermined, and thrown down in fragments into the stream. The soil upon the hills is universally composed of red rich loam, with a sprinkling of particles of quartz, and sometimes talc, though talc is but rare; and if we may judge from the exuberance of the vegetation upon them, they also would well remunerate the cultivators. Large masses of granite are scattered over these hills, and seem indebted for their often whimsical position to some convulsion of Nature. Whether it is owing to the effects of a long series of mismanagement under the Native government in causing emigration, or to the harassing wars which devastated the country, there is but little cultivation; immense tracts are covered with reedy jungle, sacred to the buffalo, the elephant, and the rhinoceros, where human habitation is unknown, and the atmosphere is loaded with miasmata and death. The principal articles of cultivation are rice, mustard seed, opium and cotton. The opium is prepared by absorbing the fresh juice of the poppy by a stripe of cotton cloth, till it is saturated. When dry it is tied up in rolls for the market and called *kauni*. In using it about two inches square of this cloth is infused in boiling water, and drank at a draught. The cotton is chiefly grown upon the hills, or little patches cleared of the jungle. Silk worms are occasionally reared; and a very stout cloth called *moonya*, or *mooya*, is manufactured from their thread. Stick lac is collected in very considerable quantities.

Burhampooter.—The Burhampooter may be called the great drain of Assam, and not only of it, but of the mountainous countries that bound it on the north and south. It is a river of the very first magnitude, and perhaps pays more tribute water to the ocean, than the great Ganges itself. From the uncultivated nature of the country, a voyage up is always a tedious one, and as dreary a trip as one could well desire. For days and days together nought else is visible but sandbanks, and water bounding the very horizon, with no trace of vegetation but an endless jungle of gigantic reeds; without the footstep of an inhabitant or signs of animal life, but water-fowl and alligators. These rude pieces of Nature's workmanship are very numerous; they are almost all of the duck bill species. I have not seen more than three of the short-nosed or bull-headed ones. The dandies have the greatest dread of the latter; but not the least of the long-nosed ones. So little apparent affinity to animal life do they in their basking hours evince, that one could easily imagine them taking root and vegetating upon the mud and slime on which they repose, or fancy them a concrete lump of clay, moulded into shape by the passing stream, encrusted by the drifting sand, and wrought into bass relief, by the tear and wear of the seasons.

Though this is the general nature of the Burhampooter, it is occasionally relieved by groups of beautifully wooded hills, whose shape and color, constantly changing by position, gratify the eye with a pleasant

panorama, till other and nearer groups come into view. As the voyager advances higher up, the scenery improves; and a series of hills innumerable, retiring far away in fine perspective, till their blue conical tops are relieved by the snowy peaks of the Himalayah mountains, towering their icy pinnacles midway up to the vertex of the sky, afford one of the grandest scenes to be met with.

To a wanderer from the land of "the mountain and the flood," the sight of a hill in this level land is at first a most interesting object. Few things more readily summon up before the mind's eye the associations of the day of his boyhood, and he hails its appearance like a friend of his youth met in a foreign land, after long years of danger and vicissitude. For this reason, the scenery of Assam is always agreeable, his eye wanders from hill to hill as over faces once familiar, and with happy invention assimilates them with the "*banks and braes and bonny hills*" of his dearly beloved home.

Navigation.—In the Navigation of Assam there is less variety of boats than might be expected, where the inhabitants are so dependent upon them that a boat is as common to every hut as a brass lota, or a Khitchree pot. Yet the canoe may be called the only boat peculiar to the country. However, many of these are of an enormous size, and capable of carrying two hundred maunds, though cut out of the solid trunk of one single tree. Such a thing as a sail is as seldom used as a tracking rope or *goon*: in going down the river they are propelled by oars, or more commonly paddles, and in stemming the current they push along the shore with long poles. When bulky cargoes, such as cotton, are brought down the country, a common practice is to fasten two canoes together by transverse beams, so that the canoes remain three or four feet apart: the whole platform is loaded with cotton or straw, and in this way they admit of carrying a much heavier load than they could when disunited, and with much greater safety.

I have often been struck with the sagacity, or rather instinct, with which the *dandies* picked out their course amidst the multitude of channels branching in every direction, and all of them so broad and deep that it seemed difficult to say which was the main stream. Navigation is now brought to such perfection that a commander gets as little credit for the correct management of his ship, as the driver of a stage coach, or the conductor of a steam train along a railway. But the navigator of such a river as the Burhampooter has infinitely more difficulties to contend with; where the river is so extensive that it has more the appearance of a series of immense lakes, the communications of which are often so undefined and uncertain that one knows not which way to steer, and at best only vaguely pointed out by the lazy current or a casual sail; where he has neither chart nor compass to guide him; where so few opportunities occur of getting information from other dandies, or the inhabitants; where the country is so flat that no landmarks are conspicuous from any distance; where old banks are constantly disappearing and new ones rising into view; where one month he might pass by a thriving village, and in passing the spot a month or two after no trace of its

existence would be discernible; and yet with all these obstacles and exceptions, the *dandies* very rarely take a wrong direction.

Population.—Though the population of Assam chiefly consists of Hindoos, yet it contains a considerable portion of Moosulmans also. Neither the one sect nor the other are very rigidly observant of their high caste principles; they have less distinction and pride of caste, and a greater latitude and toleration in their intercourse with one another. They eat opium to such excess as to be for the most part under its influence, and drink arrak to intoxication.

The Assamese have generally, I might almost say universally, been described in history as a degenerate and weakly race; but so far is this from being correct, that they are tall, muscular, and powerful. The men are a shade or two lighter than the Bengales; with high cheek bones, and a physiognomy a good deal similar to the Chinese. The women are fairer than any race in India, and possess a greater share of personal beauty: not Hindoostanee beauty, properly so called, but a configuration of form and feature, and a blending of the rose and the lily closely approaching to European.

The mountainous parts of the country are inhabited by Ganows, Rabbas, and Cacharies, who seem to have no caste at all. They are robust in person in the extreme, and of immense strength of body; they go, men, women, and children, almost literally naked, and lead a life as nearly approaching that of the savage as possible. A Ganow's greatest treasure is as many human skulls as his house can hold, his greatest cordial a pint of English brandy, and his greatest dainty a pudding made by feeding a young dog with as much rice as he can hold, and then roasting him alive till the rice is cooked. The Ganow women are among the ugliest pieces of female nature, sturdy and masculine, yet as fond of ornaments as the fairest of the daughters of Eve. But quantity seems to have more charms for them than quality, and they are delighted with loading themselves with rings, and chains, and bells of solid brass, enough to break the neck of any lady in the country. From ten to fifteen or more brass rings, as thick as a goose-quill, and three or four inches in diameter, hang in the lobe of each ear: by whose weight they are stretched so as to touch the clavicle. The lobes often being distended to a filament, eventually give way, and this is reckoned the consummation of all ornaments put together. It entitles the possessor to the envy of her own sex and the admiration of the other, and she moves with her torn ear, in the midst of her squares, with acknowledged superiority. One might suppose that the load in the ears might plead an apology for the neck's being free; but it also is cased in a mass of chains, proof against the hatchet of the executioner.

At Gowlparah there is a small society of Native Christians of Portuguese descent. They have acquired all the habits of the natives, and in outward appearance are not to be distinguished from them. The natives stand in great awe of them and dread their resentment.

In an essay such as this is, it would be improper to pass over a small Colony of Burmese soldiers stationed at Singymary in the district of Gowlparah. During the Assam war these soldiers surrendered to the

British Troops, and were allowed the condition of returning to their Native country. But preferring the clemency of their conquerors to the reception they might probably meet with from the Burmese Government, they were granted an asylum in the Honorable Company's dominions, had lands to cultivate assigned them, and an advance of capital to enable them to commence their farming. This Colony originally amounted to about 500 men, but they are now reduced to less than one half. Many of them have died: many others have deserted their old commander, and fled into the neighboring hills; and the remainder having taken to themselves wives of the country, are increasing in substance and multiplying. In any disturbances amongst the hill tribes, these soldiers are available as a police force, and, when armed by the civil powers, are found useful, effective and trust-worthy.

Slavery.—Slavery still continues to a very considerable extent: and these poor wretches are bought and sold every day for fifteen or twenty rupees. Every Native in the receipt of more than ten or twelve rupees a month has one, two, or three of them, and all the drudgery of the household and the labor of the field are performed by them. Many of these have been enthralled by mortgaging their bodies for a few rupees, and, for the want of the means of raising the original sum accumulated by exorbitant usury, continue in bondage for life, themselves and their descendants, from generation to generation.

Houses.—The houses throughout Assam are all elevated upon platforms of earth about three or four feet high. The walls are made of large posts sunk deep into the ground, lined with mats or reeds, and plastered with clay and cowdung. The rich and the poor make use of the same sort of materials, with this difference, that the baboo's is of larger size, with a finer texture of mats, and has a higher terrace.

Conveyance.—Where water affords so ready a conveyance, carriages and beasts of burden are in less demand; and so little are their services turned to any account in Assam, that it is possible to travel from one extremity to the other and not see a wheel carriage or a laden bullock. Man himself is the only beast of burden, and while his plough-oxen are grazing in the skirts of the neighboring jungle, recruiting their emaciated carcasses, he carries to the nearest market upon bangies, and at great labor to himself, the small quantity of surplus grain—the fruits of their combined toil.

Antiquities.—The Antiquities, like most other countries in India, are either of a religious or a war-like order, and are deserving of particular notice. Near Gowhatty, on the summit of a hill, stand the famous temples of Comikya; one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in India. Thither pilgrims concentrate from all parts of Hindostan, with confident hopes of their devotional requests being granted, when they might have sued at other altars in vain. The buildings themselves are very handsome structures, on a pretty extensive scale, and would stand a comparison with most second-rate temples in the country. But the temples of the present day, composed of brick and mortar, seem only of modern date, and have undoubtedly been erected upon the ruins of a much more ancient set, built of hewn and carved granite. These fine

masses of masonry are not honored with a situation in the modern structures ; but are degraded by being transformed into paving stones, steps of stairs, gutters, and other subservient purposes. Even in that low state, evidences of their former grandeur still remain, and a carved moulding, a bass relief, a fragment of a flower, or a frustum of a column, proves their former pre-eminence. So very extensive have these antique buildings of Comikya been, that the road up the hill, about a mile long and thirty feet broad, is paved from top to bottom with these granite ruins ; a work itself of enormous labor and expense. On the rocks along the side of the road several Hindoo images as large as life are sculptured ; but their execution is rude and imperfect, betraying a degree of workmanship infinitely inferior to what may be seen on many of these despised paving stones.

Almost every hill around Gowhatty is crowned with one or two pretty little temples, peeping in conical beauty through the trees ; but most of them have some granite ruins scattered round them, and afford the same proofs of having supplanted other buildings superior to themselves.

So well are these temples still endowed, that they are all of them in complete repair, and inhabited by all the ministers and mercenaries of Hindoo religion.

Gowhatty is believed to have long been a favored abode of the Hindoo deities : and yet it appears they liked to keep the Burhampooter between themselves and their worshippers, and had their secret retreat on the opposite side of the river. Tradition says that in coming down, gods and goddesses, to the river to bathe one morning, their amorous passions unluckily exposed them to mortal gaze ; to hide their shame and secure themselves against ever again exposing themselves in such a foolish predicament, they instantly threw up a small rocky island. But the natives seem to have understood the use of the miraculous island as well as themselves, and to this day call it *Arparbat*. Around Gowhatty there are many remains of extensive fortifications ; the mounds and ditches of many of them can still be traced for miles, without interruption ; the gateways of some are still standing, and the guns of others are still lying on the ramparts. Tanks of the most capacious dimensions are very numerous, and many of them are only observable from the boggy nature of the pseudo-soil which undulates upon the water concealed beneath it ; or from the exuberance of reeds and jungles with which they are choked. Rungpore, far up the Burhampooter, is also celebrated for its fine temples, and they are by many thought superior in architecture to any in Assam.

On the hill of Gowalparah stand, or rather are buried the foundations of some very extensive buildings ; but what purposes they have served seems undefined. No mortar has been used in cementing them, but merely the red clay of the hill. It is remarkable that the bricks are quite different in size and shape from any generally used in India, and in all respects resemble those used in England. There are many bricks of a huge size amongst them, about one foot square and eight inches in thickness.

(To be continued.)

ON AMYGDALUS PERSICA.

BY M. ANTONY, M.D. AUGUSTA. GEORGIA.

I AM not conscious of any difference in the medicinal powers of the numerous varieties of this species of *Amygdalus*, but have for many years used for their sedative powers the leaves of any of those varieties which we cultivate for their fruit.

During the summer of 1831, after the prevalence of East winds for some weeks, a fever of unusual severity appeared here. These fevers were of remittent type, and rendered peculiarly fatal by their being generally attended with gastric irritation; and indeed in very many cases, a high degree of gastritis and gastro-enteritis, with all their usual distresses and dangers, prevailed. No symptom was so uniform, especially during the first half or two-thirds of the fever season, as a total inability to retain in the stomach the lightest article of diet, or most simple drink, with more or less tenderness of the epigastrium, on pressure. These distresses attended early with a sallow pallor, shrinking of features, and sometimes a pale leaden hue of skin, and general prostration.

This state of the stomach at once, and as long as it continued, precluded all possibility of internal administrations, adapted to the treatment of bilious cases. Effervescing draughts—even a spoonful of cold water, were often rejected. Sinapisms and epispastics were used in vain. The state of stomach reminded me of some of those cases of plague in which this condition of stomach is a regular and troublesome symptom, and in which Laurel water has been found the chief corrective. Our Apothecaries could not furnish that article. Believing its virtues consisted mainly in the Prussic Acid which it contained, I determined to substitute it by some other article from which I could obtain the same power in a safe form, for ordinary use. For this purpose the *Prunus Padus* (wild cherry) and *Amygdalus Persica* (common Peach) were presented to my mind. The latter being always at hand in every garden, I determined on making my first experiment with it. The time for the petals had past. I filled a small vessel with the fresh leaves from the tree, loosely thrown in, then filled the vessel with boiling water and covered it closely. Of this infusion I gave 3ss. every 15, 20, or 60 minutes, according to the greater or less violence of the symptoms. I rarely, if ever, used the 4th dose before the distressing symptom was sufficiently removed to need no more. That acute—most distressing, distracting thirst, which called incessantly for drink, and was in many of those cases perfectly insatiable, was generally allayed with equal ease; and although the taste of the infusion was most bitter and disgusting to the natural sense, in these cases it was scarcely ever rejected; but on the contrary, called for most anxiously after the first taste of it; even by children, to whom bitter drugs are generally so offensive.

I frequently applied to the epigastrium also, with good effect, the leaves taken warm out of the infusion; but the infusion was generally found far more successful. The gastric symptoms in this fever were not so commonly met with towards the close of the season; but the distressing thirst was common to the end. The efficiency of the remedy was al-

most hourly tested until the close of the season, and my confidence in its uniformity of effect thereby continually confirmed.

One or two cases of ordinary Cholera Morbus came under my notice in the latter part of the season, in which it was equally prompt in relieving the vomiting. Several sporadic cases of Cholera Infantum occurred after the close of the fever season, in which it was used with no less conspicuous benefit. Since the above experience, I have often used this infusion with the most marked benefit in that irritable stomach which often attends Cholera Infantum, as well as gastric and gastro-enteritic fevers.

In addition to the above, I am happy in being able to state, on the authority and observation of my colleague, Dr. Dugas, Professor of Anatomy, that it has proved a convenient, prompt, safe and uniform remedy in Pertussis. His prescription is to give the patient one pint of a pretty strong infusion each day, in divided doses, until the disease disappears; and that, in families having 12 or 20 cases, he very rarely has occasion to make another prescription—the disease generally disappearing within four or five days.

The power of Prussic Acid in actually curing this disease, immediately on arriving at the full dose for the patient, was abundantly demonstrated in my practice in 1822. But the difficulties attending the use of Off. Prussic Acid are such, owing to the various strength, age, &c. that it cannot ever become a remedy in general practice, except near a competent and correct Chemist.

But we here have great cause of gratitude to an ever-bountiful Providence, for strewing around us a simple, safe and cheap remedy, accessible to all.

I need say nothing of the efficacy of this medicine in the cure of those cases of Hæmaturia which depend on irritations in the urinary passages, as it has been long known to the profession.—*Southern Med. and Surg. Jour.*

CASE OF POISONING WITH DATURA STRAMONIUM,

SHOWING THE UNCERTAINTY OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE IN MEDICO-LEGAL INVESTIGATIONS.

BY CHARLES HOOKER, M.D.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

AN Irish family was taken suddenly ill, after eating a dinner of corned beef and boiled greens. The family consisted of five persons, Mr. T. his wife, and three children, the eldest about eight, the youngest about five years of age. I saw them about an hour after dinner, when the symptoms were immediately recognized as the effects of the *Datura*. The countenances had a wild idiotic expression—the pupils widely dilated—the sensorial functions perverted—and the muscular system subject to an irregular agitation somewhat resembling that of chorea. The appearance of the family was extremely ludicrous. The children were laughing, crying, singing, dancing, and playing all imaginable antic pranks. They had no correct estimation of distances, or the size of

objects—were reaching their hands to catch hold of objects across the room, and again running against persons and things which they appeared to view as distant. The nail heads in the floor were pieces of money, which they eagerly tried to pick up. A boy, apparently fancying himself undressed, caught a hat belonging to a student, thrust his foot into it, pulled with both hands on the brim, and began to fret that he could not “get on his trowsers.” The parents frequently called on the children to behave themselves; but, their own actions being equally eccentric, they afforded a ridiculous exhibition of family government.

Sulphate of zinc with ipecac brought from the stomachs a large quantity of the *Datura* plant with other green vegetables; and under the use of Camphor, Carb. Ammoniac, and a warm aromatic infusion, the narcotic symptoms soon subsided.

The cause of these symptoms was no sooner known, than suspicions were fixed on a Mrs. A., a woman of indolent, intemperate habits, who lived in the same house. The Irish family moved into the house about a week previous—a circumstance which gave some offence to Mrs. A. Until this morning she had avoided speaking to her new neighbors, and she had never mentioned them except in harsh and threatening language. She had frequently wished the family dead—hoped they would all die if they remained in the house—and intimated a willingness to “poison them if she could get a chance.” This morning her tone suddenly changed—she came into Mrs. T.’s room, addressed her in terms of extreme kindness, engaged in free conversation, and at length remarked that she observed Mr. T. had provided a fine piece of corned beef for dinner, advised Mrs. T. to boil a mess of greens with the beef, and herself went out to gather the greens.

Mrs. T. and the eldest two children, who picked over and washed the greens, declared that Mrs. A. gathered the whole of them. She gathered the greens in a field where the *Datura* was abundant. It appeared evident, moreover, that she could not have gathered the plant ignorantly, since, only a few days previous, she had pointed out “the poison stramonium” to some neighbors, earnestly cautioning them against the use of it. Another circumstance tending to increase suspicion was that she left the house immediately after the family sickened, and was not found until after considerable search and inquiry.

Circumstances seemed strong against Mrs. A., and measures were taken towards a criminal prosecution. The youngest Irish child was scarcely five years old, and had been considered as incapable of giving any information on the subject. Fortunately for Mrs. A. it occurred to me that this child would at least be free from any design to give the matter a false coloring; and, on being questioned in regard to the greens, with the usual candid simplicity of a child, she immediately led us into the back yard, where the *Datura* grew in profusion, and showed where and how she gathered greens for dinner. The mother, who before had concealed this fact, probably from feelings of hatred and malice towards Mrs. A., now confessed that a small basketful of the *Datura*, gathered by the little girl, was mixed with the mess for dinner. Still the very sudden conciliatory conduct of Mrs. A. towards the Irish family seemed

unaccountable. Probably, however, this circumstance might be explained by the fact that, with her accustomed indolence, she had made no provision for dinner; and, seeing a piece of beef carried into the other part of the house, she adopted this plan, as a matter of policy, in expectation of an invitation to dine with the family.

New Haven, Ct. August 19, 1836.

ANOMALOUS CASE OF AMAUROSIS.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR—The following particulars of a case of *amaurosis*, the truth of which may be relied upon, have lately come to my knowledge; and from their novelty, I am induced to send them to you. If you think they are of sufficient interest to merit a place in your valuable Journal, they are at your service.

Jane H—, of this place, now in her 12th year, some time in May, 1835 (the day not recollected), arose in the morning with a disagreeable sensation in her right eye, which exhibited a somewhat inflamed and watery appearance. She was directed, by her mother, to wash it in cold water, and secure it from the light with a bandage. During the forenoon, she had occasion to remove the bandage, and found, to her surprise, that the vision of the eye was totally extinct. A physician was called in, who ordered her an emetic, to be followed by a cathartic. These not proving efficacious, leeches were applied to the temples, and a blister to the nape of the neck. These means improved the general health, which had not been very good, subdued the inflammation, and restored the eye to its natural appearance, but had no effect whatever upon its vision. The eye was secluded from the air and light for a time, but finding they did not affect it, the shade was removed. The eye appeared and felt, in all respects, as well as the other, but so great was its blindness that darkness and light were undistinguishable. This state continued until some time in February following, when she had her ears bored. On the morning after, as she awoke, she was as much surprised as she had been on losing her sight, to find it perfectly restored. The eye remained well for about two months, when a "kind of tingling sensation" was felt in it, and soon after followed by a second loss of vision, though with no apparent change in its appearance. In this instance the sight of the other eye was considerably affected. In a few weeks sight was again spontaneously restored, but not so suddenly, nor, at first, so perfectly as before; objects for a time, as she said, presented a "glossy appearance." She has since had no return of the affection.

I ought, perhaps, to have mentioned, that the patient, for several months previous to her first restoration to sight, was affected with a severe, and, as her mother expressed it, "peculiar cough," such an one as she had never heard before.

To what was this blindness owing? Did perforating the ears have any effect in restoring the vision?

Lowell, Aug. 18, 1836.

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, AUGUST 31, 1836.

ITALIAN PUBLICATIONS ON MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

In a package addressed to the President of the Massachusetts Medical Society, we find several tracts by Dr. Placido Portel, of Palermo, the spirit of which will soon be laid before our readers. One is entitled *Breve Rapporto Sulla Ottalmia che afflisse la truppa Napolitana in Palermo, dagli anni 1824 al 1826*. Another bears the following: *Demonomania con Commozione Cerebrale senza Stravaso osservazione dal, &c.* When the translations are completed, provided the articles are copied in detail, our correspondents are invited to criticize as freely as they please—keeping in view the possibility that Dr. Portel may be the sufferer, in some degree, by the translation of his language into English. The author invites a strict examination, and whatever is written, to that end, will be sent to him. The following letter, in badly written French, shows that the doctor is desirous of knowing something of our medical literature in the western world.

"SIR—Although I have not the honor of knowing you personally, the reputation you sustain in the literary republic, and at the academy of which you have the honor to be president, encourages me to forward you some of my medical and surgical publications, that you may present them to the Society as a mark of my respect. It is already some time since I sent by Dr. S——, Surgeon of an American vessel, several diplomas to your care, from this Royal Academy of Medicine, that you might present them to the most distinguished physicians in that part of the country in which you reside. You will oblige me much, sir, in case you receive this, to answer it by the bearer. You know well, sir, that associations have a tendency to augment the efforts of men of science, to be useful to others. You will give me a new claim to your esteem if you will 'send me the labors of the members of the medical society, that I may be informed of the medical discoveries in the new world.

"If I should have the happiness to know that this letter has reached you, I shall immediately send to your address all the other works I have published. Accept, sir, the expression of my esteem and regard, and believe me with the most perfect consideration, your most obedient servant.

Palermo.

PLACIDO PORTEL."

Pseudo-Medical Discussions.—Dr. A. Curtis, of Columbus, Ohio, whose ambition evidently prompts him to become the Alpha and Omega of all steam quackery in the west, has forwarded a duodecimo to our address, containing four hundred pages, entitled "Discussions between several members of the regular Medical Faculty and the Thomsonian Botanic Physicians, &c." with a special request that the preface may be published in the Journal. This we shall do, to show that we entertain no personal hostility to the man who asks the favor, though he has endeavored to handle our humble self from the 317th to the 329th page, in what he proba-

bly considers fine style. Because we refused, some time since, to admit into this Journal a communication from Dr. C. which was neither useful, reasonable, nor even creditable to a person of reputed common sense, we have been held up to the gaze of Thomsonian ignoramuses, as the arch enemy of these great, devoted, persecuted botanico-medical pretenders, who are, as a general rule, as profoundly ignorant of the leading principles of medical philosophy, as they are deficient in a grammatical knowledge of the English language. We neither ask their patronage, nor covet their esteem; and we shall not only boldly denounce their system whenever occasion requires, but continually warn the people to shun it as they would a pestilence that spares not.

This self-styled Doctor Curtis makes himself unnecessarily obnoxious; not content with being treated kindly and politely, he evidently endeavors to provoke a controversy. Perhaps on this, much of his own dignity and influence with his own kith and kin, depends. The following is the Preface.

"Though I have copied the favorite motto of Jefferson, 'Error is harmless, where truth is left free to combat it,' I must remark that, so numerous and powerful are the prejudices against truth, and so great is the unwillingness of most minds to embrace it when presented, that this 'wise saying' is subject to many exceptions and limitations which make it exceedingly desirable that error should never be spread before the public mind, even under circumstances the most favorable for its counteraction. Still if it *must* be disseminated, nothing can be more desirable than that truth should be 'close at its heels.'

"Though the following discussions, first published in sundry political newspapers in different parts of the United States, are now re-published in a more compact and permanent form, at the earnest solicitation of the friends of the Thomsonian System; yet, as they contain also, entire, all the arguments brought against it by its regular opponents; we have reason to expect that the latter will subscribe as largely to their distribution, as the former have done.

We have further reason to expect the co-operation of 'regular physicians' in the dissemination of this work, in the fact that Dr. Deloney boasts of having demolished our system, which Dr. 'Medicus' intimates is worse than the cholera, and that Dr. Williams says, 'All I would ask, is for it to be placed in the hands of the public.' Surely *these* gentlemen will aid us with all their might.

"A southern correspondent of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, says, (vol. xi. page 215), 'Let scientific physicians discountenance this (Thomsonian) quackery through the medium of journals, &c.,' and the editor of that paper says, (vol. xii. page 308), 'We perfectly agree in sentiment with the talented author of the review' (Dr. Deloney's, of our lectures, page —). We expect that the Journal will earnestly recommend to physicians to scatter our book all over the United States.

"Those gentlemen will here see that Drs. Williams, Medicus, and Deloney have put a strong hand to this work, and of course we shall depend on them for the *gratuitous* distribution of many hundreds of copies. Dr. Miller of the Baltimore Almshouse too, will doubtless use his powerful influence, to aid us in our benevolent exertions to expose this destructive 'Thomsonalgia' to the 'enlightened circle in which he moves.'

"With the exception of the two Baltimore lectures, which contain something like a connected, fair and full view of the two Medical Sys-

tems, their comparative merits, and the conduct of their advocates, the Botanic writers contented themselves with keeping pretty generally, in the path marked out by their *regular* opponents, satisfied rather to take them in the snares of their own setting, than to dig new pits for their capture."

Presuming 'hat none but a lunatic would think of purchasing the volume, our copy of it is at the service of all borrowers.

Diseases of the Uterus.—In the Hospital of La Pitié, in which M. Lisfranc has charge, particularly, of two female wards, the patients of which have diseases of the uterus, much success attends the treatment of simple superficial erosion of the cervix uteri. In ulcerations, a recumbent posture and occasional venesections, to the amount of a few ounces, together with small doses of cicuta and cauterization with a solution of mercury in nitric acid every six or eight days, most commonly brings about a cure. When the ulceration cannot be overcome by this process, an excision of the cervix necessarily follows. The part is carefully exposed by a speculum, and then firmly seized by forceps and brought without the orifice of the vagina, to be excised. Sedatives commonly overcome the nervous symptoms; severe hæmorrhages rarely occur. Eighty-four cases, out of ninety-nine on whom he has operated in this bold manner, have recovered. Several of these afterwards have had children, and "experienced no particular inconvenience in parturition."

Paralysis of the Bladder and Vesical Catarrh.—It must be admitted that the contrivance of M. Civiale, of the Necker hospital, to obviate this malady, is perfectly original. A stream of cold water flows from a reservoir near the ceiling, through an India-rubber tube, armed by stopcocks, and which terminates with a silver catheter, having two canals, side by side. When the patient is placed upon his back, the water flows into the bladder by one half the apparently single instrument, and out again through the other. Thus the bladder is rinsed about ten minutes at a time, every second or third day, the quantity of cold water being regulated by the stopcocks, to prevent over distension of the organ. On the tonic action of the cold water, together with the clearing away of adhering mucus, the beneficial effects of this novel treatment are supposed to depend. We were invited, by a medical gentleman, to examine a case of diseased bladder, within a few weeks, in which this treatment would seem to offer some prospect of relief. Being an intelligent man, should these remarks fall under his eye, he may be induced to submit to the operation. A thickening of the walls of the bladder, which consequently diminishes its capacity, and induces a desire to void the urine, is very frequently mistaken for an enlargement of the prostate gland. The latter disease cannot be radically and permanently overcome by medicinal agents; but to the irritable, ulcerated bladder, a direct application may be made, by injections, to the abraded surfaces, and a perfect restoration to health be effected

Surgical Skill of Peter the Great.—In the year 1698, Peter commenced the study of anatomy at Leyden, and afterwards pursued it at Amsterdam, under the great anatomist Ruysch. He seems to have had pe-

culiar pleasure in witnessing human dissections. At Moscow, he was at one time punctual in his attendance on the anatomical lectures of M. Bidloo. It is told of the Czar, in evidence of his zeal in this kind of knowledge, that he directed that the dissection of a half-witted page who had died by intoxication, should be postponed till he could be present. He ordered that all monstrosities produced in the empire, should be brought to St. Petersburg for preservation. This accounts for the enormous collection of these freaks of nature in the imperial museum, still in good and royal condition. He always carried a case of surgical instruments in his pocket, in which there were lancets, tooth forceps, a saw-knife, spatula, scissors, a sound and a catheter. He was extremely ambitious to be thought a first-rate operator. He required that notice should be given him of all important operations, and he attended as many of them as the nature of his multifarious concerns, as emperor of the greatest kingdom, geographically considered, on the globe, would allow. Tooth-drawing, bleeding, &c. he was continually engaged in. A merchant had an abscess on his foot opened by his *terrific* majesty, which proved so successful, that the royal surgeon became enamored with his own professional abilities. People began to be in fear of their monarch's love of the art of healing, and therefore governed themselves accordingly. When the news reached the duchess of Mecklinburg, who also had a similar disease of the foot, she left the city post-haste, lest assistance should be tendered from the palace. A merchant's wife, who was laboring under a dropsy of the abdomen, utterly refused to be governed by the advice of her medical attendants. Such was the singularity of the case, that, like everything else, Peter heard of it. He immediately waited on the lady, and partly by persuasion, but probably more through the danger she apprehended from refusing the surgical tyrant, in the presence of the faculty, he actually, with his own hands, performed the nice operation of paracentesis abdominis, and drew off twenty-four pounds of water. Unfortunately the patient expired. He had a remarkable giant, and a dwarf equally remarkable. It so happened that they both died some time before their indomitable master. By his express command, they were both flayed, and their skins stuffed, for the future wonder and admiration of the curious.

Medical Meeting in Belgium.—There was an unusually spirited meeting of a new medical association at Brussels, in September, which was in session six days. Orations, and addresses, a history of medicine, drawings of monsters, and a well-authenticated account of a child that cried in utero, beside a multitude of other locally important and novel things, calculated to excite attention, received proper notice from the assembly. Two or three individuals appear to have done all the talking, and thereby very clearly show that they intend to reap most of the benefits accruing from the organization of the new society. It seems that a certain malady is very rife in the new kingdom, as a prize of one thousand francs was offered "by a friend of medical science," for the best essay which should "set forth and determine the medical means and administrative regulations best adapted to put a stop to, or diminish, the propagation of Syphilis." A house of correction, a police court, a vigilant eye to street-walkers, and conscientious magistrates, would be among the most certain diminishing influences.

Turpentine in Sciatica.—Cases which resisted ordinary means have been found to yield, by M. Duwos, to enemata containing a large dose of the essential oil of turpentine. In one instance, the pain was overcome by one enema of an ounce of oil of turpentine. Do any of our correspondents know anything for or against this practice?

Medical Miscellany.—The scarlet fever and measles are prevalent and unusually fatal among the children in Northampton.—The quantity of opium used in China the last year, is valued at \$9,449,315.—Dr. D. L. M. Peixotto, of New York, has been appointed Professor of Theory and Practice of Physic, in the Willoughby Medical College.—The Hospital of Valencay, founded by Talleyrand, possesses a chalice valued at 30,000 francs, given by the Pope to the king of Poland.—The Public Ledger says that the Pennsylvania Hospital is a truly *charitable* institution, provided one can pay for it.—The smallpox is said to prevail alarmingly in the second and fourth wards, of New York.—Dr. Combe, on Digestion, republished by Marsh, Capen & Lyon, meets the approbation of physicians very generally. The edition sells rapidly.

DIED—At the Insane Hospital, Worcester, John Lummas, M.D. of Lynn, aged 46.—At New Orleans, shot by an assassin, Dr. Alexander Ledger.—At Bartholomew, Chicot Co. Indiana, Dr. George W. Wood, aged 36 years; formerly of Winthrop, Me.—In New York, J. A. Anderson, M.D. aged 30.—In Charlestown, Va. Dr. Thomas H. Gibson, of Circleville, Ohio.

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending August 27, 36. Males, 20—females, 16.
Dysentery, 2—cholera infantum, 2—infantile, 6—old age, 1—throat distemper, 2—bowel complaint, 6—liver complaint, 1—hooping cough, 1—teething, 1—convulsions, 2—canker in the bowels, 1—dropsy on the brain, 4—bilious fever, 1—accidental, 1—intemperance, 1—inflammation of bowels, 3—cholera morbus, 1—stillborn, 2.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

The Medical Lectures in Harvard University will begin at the Massachusetts Medical College in Mason Street, Boston, the first Wednesday in November next, at 1-4 before 9 A. M. and will continue three months. For one month after the end of the course Lectures will be delivered in the College, and the Dissecting Room will be open to such Students as may remain, without additional fee. Such Students may also attend the Practice of the Massachusetts General Hospital.

Anatomy and Operations in Surgery,	Dr. WARREN.
Chemistry,	Dr. WEBSTER.
Materia Medica,	Dr. RIGELOW.
Midwifery and Medical Jurisprudence,	Dr. CHANNING.
Principles of Surgery and Clinical Surgery,	Dr. HAYWARD.
Theory and Practice of Physic,	Dr. WARE.

Clinical Lectures will be delivered as usual on the cases in the Massachusetts General Hospital.
New Dissecting Room.—A new Dissecting Room is now building, and will be finished before the Lectures begin. It will occupy all the vacant land at the East of the Medical College. Every care is taking to make this important part of the Medical School as perfect as possible, so that it may furnish to the Student ample facilities for prosecuting his Anatomical studies. The legal enactments of the State, so liberally and so wisely framed, will be faithfully and thoroughly applied to the accomplishment of their important objects.

WALTER CHANNING, Dean.

July, 1836.

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PEPPERELL INSTITUTION FOR THE INSANE.

DR. NEHEMIAH CUTLER would inform his friends and the public that he has returned to Pepperell, and has taken charge of the institution for invalids, at that place, to which he will devote strict personal attention at all times. He solicits a continuance of the confidence and patronage of his friends and the public generally.

Pepperell, Mass. July 27, 1836.

Aug. 3—tf

REMOVAL.

CHARLES WHITE respectfully informs the Physicians, his friends, and the public, that he has removed to No. 230 Washington St. four doors south of Summer St. and nearly opposite his old stand.

C. W. returns his most grateful acknowledgments to the Physicians, and his friends, for their past favors, and hopes, by strict personal attention, as heretofore, to Physicians' prescriptions, and to the compounding and delivery of Family Medicines, to have a continuance.

Boston, Aug. 24.

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MEDICAL INSTRUCTION.

The subscribers are associated for the purpose of giving a complete course of medical instruction, and will receive pupils on the following terms:

The pupils will be admitted to the practice of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and will receive clinical lectures on the cases they witness there. Instruction, by lectures or examinations, will be given in the intervals of the public lectures, every week day.

On Midwifery, and the Diseases of Women and Children, and on Chemistry	by	DR. CHANNING.
On Physiology, Pathology, Therapeutics, and Materia Medica	- - -	DR. WARE.
On the Principles and Practice of Surgery	- - -	DR. OTIS.
On Anatomy	- - -	DR. LEWIS.

The students are provided with a room in Dr. Lewis's house, where they have access to a large library. Lights and fuel without any charge. The opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of Anatomy are not inferior to any in the country.

The fees are \$100—to be paid in advance. No credit given, except on sufficient security of some person in Boston, nor for a longer period than six months.

Applications are to be made to Dr. Walter Channing, Tremont Street, opposite the Tremont House, Boston.

WALTER CHANNING,
JOHN WARE,
GEORGE W. OTIS, JR.,
WINSLOW LEWIS, JR.

Jan 20—lyep

BERKSHIRE MEDICAL INSTITUTION.

The Annual Course of Lectures for 1836 will commence the last THURSDAY in August, and continue thirteen weeks.

H. H. CHILDS, M.D. Theory and Practice of Medicine and Obstetrics.

E. BARLETT, M.D. Pathological Anatomy.

DAVID PALMER, M.D. Materia Medica and Pharmacy.

C. DEWEY, M.D. Botany, Chemistry and Natural Philosophy.

W. PARKER, M.D. Surgery and Physiology.

R. WATTS, JR. M.D. General and Special Anatomy.

Hon. HENRY HUBBARD, Legal Medicine.

The Trustees of the Berkshire Medical Institution, in issuing their annual Circular, believe themselves justified in promising to those young men, whose local situation or whose personal predilections may lead them to a connection with the School, a course of public instruction as thorough, efficient and practical as can be enjoyed at any of our various medical establishments. To the branches heretofore taught, which have been the same as in other American Medical Schools, arrangements have been made for the addition of a Course of Lectures on PATHOLOGICAL ANATOMY, to be illustrated by morbid specimens and by an extensive series of colored representations of diseased structures.

By legalizing the study of Anatomy, the Legislature of Massachusetts has furnished its Schools with superior advantages for Practical Anatomy. It has also, by this provision, most effectually guarded the sepulchres of the dead against all violation.

Fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and those who have received the degree of M.D. are admitted gratuitously to the Lectures. The degree of M.D. is conferred at the annual Commencement of the Institution and at the Commencement of Williams College. The requisitions for the degree of Doctor in Medicine are three full years study under a regular practitioner, attendance on two full Courses of medical lectures in regularly established medical institutions, an adequate knowledge of the Latin language, and a good moral character.

Fee for the whole course of Lectures is \$50; those who have already attended two full courses at an incorporated medical school, pay \$10. Graduation, \$16. Board, including room rent, washing and lodging, \$2 per week; without washing, \$1 63 cents.

In one week after the close of the Public Lectures, commences the winter Reading Term, which continues 12 weeks, and is devoted to Practical Anatomy, the Principles and Practice of Surgery, and Obstetrics.

By order of the Trustees,

P. L. HALL, Secretary.

Pittsfield, June 29, 1836.

NOTE.—The following authors are recommended to be read by the students during the Lecture Term.

On Anatomy, C. Bell, Horner, Cloquet, and Wistar.

Surgery, S. Cooper, W. Gibson, and Sir A. Cooper's Works.

Practice and Theory, Gregory, Good, Eberle, Dewees, and Mackintosh.

Obstetrics, J. Burns, Dewees, and London Practice.

Materia Medica and Medical Jurisprudence, Beck, Chapman, and Eberle.

Chemistry, Brande, Turner and Beck.

Pathological Anatomy, Andral, Louis, Horner, Gross on the Bones.

July 27—48.

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT—Fairfield, Herkimer Co.—The next course of Lectures will commence on the first Tuesday in October, and continue sixteen weeks. The Lectures will be delivered as follows.

On Anatomy and Physiology, by	- - -	DR. McNAUGHTON.
On Chemistry and Pharmacy,	- - -	DR. HADLEY.
On Practice of Physic and the Diseases of Women and Children,	- - -	DR. DELAMATER.
On Materia Medica and Medical Jurisprudence,	- - -	DR. BECK.
On Surgery and Midwifery,	- - -	DR. MUSSEY.

Dr. Willoughby will also lecture on the latter branch.

Tickets for the whole course, \$56.

Any further information that is desired may be obtained from either of the above professors.

JAMES HADLEY, Register.

Fairfield, Herkimer Co. N. Y.

Aug. 10.—4t

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL is published every Wednesday, by D. CLAPP, JR. at 184 Washington Street, corner of Franklin Street, to whom all communications must be addressed, *post-paid*. It is also published in Monthly Parts, each Part containing the weekly numbers of the preceding month, stitched in a cover. J. V. C. SMITH, M.D. Editor.—Price \$3.00 a year in advance, \$3.50 after three months, and \$4.00 if not paid within the year.—Agents allowed every seventh copy *gratis*.—Orders from a distance must be accompanied by payment in advance, or satisfactory reference.—Postage the same as for a newspaper.